

An Ex-Aide To Castro Speaks Out

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"No one is going to desert Castro because a sugar mill has been attacked or a certain amount of sabotage is done . . . That worked against Batista, but it will not against Castro."

"About a month ago exile fighters began to return to Miami with the news that the C.I.A. is no longer giving them help."

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By NAT CARNES

"I broke the language barrier. I can express myself in English. I lost my complexes, and I improved my knowledge of and gratitude for the United States."

Rufo López-Fresquet, 53-year-old former Treasury Secretary for Fidel Castro, reached out for a Life Saver fixed into a colored package resting on a conference table.

Insisting his attitude is not a sell-out to the Americans, López said: "If a Latin is not lucky enough to have an American background or experience, he usually sees the U.S. as a reactionary bloc."

"This is not true," he exclaimed, his Latin emotion showing and seeming to reflect his own anxiety about the relationship between North and South America.

For López, the breakthrough—symbolized with his beginning to learn English—came when he accepted a Rockefeller Foundation scholarship to study at Columbia University in 1942-43. He learned the North American style.

Before going to the U.S., he had received a law degree from National University of Mexico City in 1933 "when I went into political exile for the first time" during the dictatorship of Gerardo Machado. After returning to Cuba, he secured a doctorate in economics at the University of Havana in 1937.

López became Treasury Secretary for Castro on Jan. 8, 1959 and then left Cuba six months after resigning the high government post March 17, 1960. He is now an economic consultant with the Commonwealth Treasury Department.

"Latin America has to give up its complex of not wanting to be a true friend of the United States," he said. "There's nothing wrong with that . . . the U.S. is the strongest nation in the world and we (Latins) must belong to the team."

He believes for the Latin not to see the United States in a friendly light is a "question of immaturity. To be pro-American in Latin America is a handicap politically."

And the United States has by its own actions compounded the

Alternating between Spanish and English, López confessed that the U.S. is not free of its



Rufo López-Fresquet (Photo by José García)
own particular brand of obsessions.

"There seems to be a complex about direct intervention into the domestic affairs of Latin America," he said. "The U.S. shouldn't be ashamed of democracy, but rather should make its feelings known frankly."

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